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Khrushchev, Nikita

P-Louis, Victor

Soc. 4.01.1 Time-Life Inc

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Taped Voice Identified as That of Khrushchev

Informed Sources Say 1 Million Recorded
Words Form Basis of Russian's Memoirs

BY DAVID KRASLOW

Times Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON — One million words recorded on tape by Nikita S. Khrushchev formed the basis of the former Soviet premier's reminiscences to be published next week, informed sources said Tuesday.

The positive identification of Khrushchev's voice and the wealth of intimate detail convinced the publishers of the authenticity of the material, it was said.

The tapes, it was understood, were brought out of Moscow by couriers over an 18-month period to Helsinki, Copenhagen, Vienna and Sofia, Bulgaria, and then delivered to Time Inc.

The manner in which Time Inc. obtained the tapes, their apparent authenticity and Khrushchev's denial from Moscow that he had arranged publication of his memoirs with Time Inc. or anyone else all gave the appearance of an underground effort to

smuggle the material out to the West.

American authorities, however, are inclined to challenge that assumption. They suspect the Soviet government, while publicly charging a "form of forgery," is secretly behind the whole operation but they are mystified at the moment as to the motive.

"There's something fishy about this whole thing," one source said. "My guess is that for some reason the Soviet government wanted some kind of line published in the West. We may have a better idea of what's behind it all when the material surfaces."

However, some persons familiar with some aspects of how the recordings reached Western hands do not discount the theory that they were smuggled out of the Soviet Union with Khrushchev's tacit approval, if not his outright help.

According to this theory

Khrushchev, proud of his contributions to Soviet life and brooding over the fact that his accomplishments have been downgraded and all but expunged from Soviet histories by the present regime, made the transcriptions so that there would be a detailed record for history.

Then, according to the theory, the tapes were taken by acquaintances from Khrushchev's home periodically when he was absent so that he could say, in truth, if questioned by Soviet authorities, that he did not know how the tapes disappeared.

Life magazine next week will publish the first of four installments excerpted from a book, "Khrushchev Remembers," to be published next month by Little, Brown & Co., a subsidiary of Time Inc.

Khrushchev's reminiscences were often repetitious, it was learned. Therefore, the translator, Nelson Strowbridge Talbot III, was able to edit them into a 470,000-word manuscript. Talbot, 24, a 1968 Yale graduate now in Oxford, Eng., on a Rhodes scholarship, was employed in the Time magazine bureau in Moscow in the summer of 1969.

Reached in Oxford by telephone Tuesday, Talbot declined to discuss his role

in the Khrushchev book? other than to acknowledge that he was the translator and editor.

Donald M. Wilson, vice president for corporate and public affairs for Time Inc., also declined to confirm that the manuscript was prepared from tapes of Khrushchev's voice. "Wait until Life comes out next week," he said.

The reported involvement of Victor Louis, a mysterious Soviet citizen, in arranging the transmission of the Khrushchev material to Time Inc. buttressed the suspicion of some American authorities that the Kremlin had secretly blessed the operation.

Louis, a correspondent for a British newspaper, has been involved in a number of international literary transactions — among other activities — suggesting intimate connections with the KGB, the Soviet secret police.

He also has been close to Khrushchev. When the premier was deposed in October, 1964, Louis was the first to report it.

Some of the chapter titles in the Khrushchev book suggest the range of the material: Fidel Castro and the Cuban crisis; the Korean war; burying the hatchet with Tito; Nasser, Suez and the Aswan Dam; the Berlin crisis; Mao Tse-tung and the schism, and

Ho Chi Minh and Vietnam.

If the Soviet government were to openly sanction publication of Khrushchev's memoirs in the West, it could not have done so without, at the same time, rehabilitating him at home.

This would have been awkward, if not unthinkable, for the present Kremlin leadership, which came to power denouncing Khrushchev as a hare-